

ERGONOMICS COMPLIANCE POLICY

I. OBJECTIVE: To establish a formal proactive plan to reduce the numbers and/or severity of injuries that occur at the workplace that are caused by a disregard for, or lack of knowledge of, the ergonomic factors in job design and to:

- A. create a safe work environment for all County employees.
- B. ensure compliance with all Federal and State safety and health statutes and regulations, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- C. promote employee wellness.
- D. reduce the County's exposure to liabilities.
- E. increase the effectiveness and efficiency of all employees to more cost effectively serve the citizens of Randolph County.

II. AUTHORITY: The County shall empower the Safety Officer to establish such policies, programs, and procedures and to issue such directives necessary to accomplish the stated purposes of this plan.

III. SCOPE: This plan applies to all employees of Randolph County, regardless of their job classification, unless specifically exempt from some specific provision of this plan by Federal or State statutes. All contract employees not specifically exempted in writing shall be subject to this plan.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

- A. ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT:** The County shall support this program with a high level of managerial commitment and financial support and by making available the necessary internal and external training and other professional services as needed. The individual employee will participate in the identification of possible ergonomic hazards associated with his/her work area. A review by the Executive Safety Committee of the OSHA Form 200 (accident report form) entries will be used to establish the primary job-related activities that present a potential hazard. Training in the proper use of ergonomics will be provided to all present employees and all newly hired persons within the first ninety days of employment and no less than every three years thereafter. All jobs identified as possessing the potential for causing Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) or Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) will be reviewed at least once every three years. This plan will be reviewed by the County Manager each year or more often if conditions require.

B. MEDICAL MANAGEMENT: Medical care for MSDs shall be provided to employees in accordance with Chapter 97 (Workers' Compensation) of the North Carolina General Statutes. The County, through the Safety Officer, shall follow the written instructions of medical care providers treating employees in accordance with Chapter 97 regarding work restrictions. Conflicting written instructions shall be resolved in accordance with Chapter. The Safety Officer may consult with medical care providers to the extent permitted by Chapter 97 regarding work activities that affect the job assignments that the affected employee performs, modifications that can be made, any alternate jobs that the employee may perform or any information that may be useful to the medical care provider in determining which, if any, work restrictions are warranted; however, the Safety Officer shall not attempt to influence medical care providers to issue medical orders that are contrary to sound medical practices. The Safety Officer shall respond to symptoms indicating the development of an MSD or RSI by implementing engineering controls, work practice controls or administrative controls to reduce or eliminate the "ergo stressor."

V. DEFINITIONS:

- A. MSD** means Musculoskeletal Disorder or any injury or disorder of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels or soft tissue, including a sprain, strain, or inflammation that may be caused or aggravated by work.
- B. RSI** means Repetitive Strain Injury that causes the pain or soreness to be localized to a specific muscle group or region of the musculoskeletal system.
- C. Ergonomics** means the science of fitting the job to the worker such that the potential for injury or pain is reduced to the lowest possible degree or eliminated.
- D. Ergo stressors** include, but are not limited to repetition, force, awkward work position, heavy lifting, extended reaching, cold temperatures, and vibrations of the extremities.
- E. Physical Therapy / Occupational Therapy (PT/OT)** treats musculoskeletal or neurological injuries utilizing manual therapy, modalities, and exercise to restore function or reduce pain.
- F. Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE)** is a measure of what tasks/ functions a person is able to perform. If a safe return to work is questionable, the FCE can be used to determine the employee's maximum safe work ability.
- H. Engineering Controls** are the use of physical means to eliminate or reduce the ergonomic hazard. This is the preferred method of control. Examples of this are using power tools instead of manual tools and using spring-loaded lifts to reduce lifting injuries.

- I. Work Practice Controls** reduce exposure to the occupational hazard by altering the manner in which the employee performs the task. This requires more individual training and supervisory time to ensure that the employee follows the rules. Examples of this type of control include training to reduce awkward hand/arm positioning and establishing better quality control to reduce repetitive motions.
- J. Administrative Controls** shape the employee's actions through training, policies, and supervision to reduce his/her exposure to the job hazards. This includes such things as pre-work and post-work physical exercises and rotating work assignments.

VI. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. The County** shall make funds, personnel, and resources available to accomplish the purposes of this plan.
- B. The Safety Officer** shall:
 - C.** establish programs and procedures to meet the purposes delineated above and to ensure the OSHA-required six (6) elements for a full ergonomic plan are incorporated in this plan. These are
 - a.** management leadership and employee participation.
 - b.** hazards information and reporting systems.
 - c.** job hazards analysis and controls.
 - d.** training.
 - e.** MSD management.
 - f.** program evaluation.
 - 2.** supervise engineering, work practice or administrative controls to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of all programs and procedures implemented in support of this plan and other related matters; develop a system to evaluate the entire plan in a timely manner.
 - 3.** create such files, forms, reports and other items as required to comply with regulatory requirements and the accomplishment of the purposes of this plan.
 - 4.** develop and conduct, or have conducted, training necessary to support this plan and any of its related programs. Within ninety days of employment all employees whose work would routinely expose them to one or more "ergo

stressors" or other employees whose job has changed to include different "ergo stressors" shall be provided information, in a manner the employee can understand, concerning the specific "ergo stressors" the employee will be exposed to during his/her work activity. This includes the types of MSDs that can develop from such exposure, work strategies that will reduce the development of MSDs, and any private activities or physical conditions that could put the employee at greater risk of developing MSDs. The employee must be made aware of the importance of reporting to his/her supervisor any unexplained pain, swelling, numbness, tingling, or loss of function in any body part that is at risk of developing MSDs from work-related activities. All employees must be given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the issue covered by the training.

C. The Department Head shall:

1. survey all tasks performed in his/her department for possible MDS/ RSI hazards.
2. report any MSD/RSI potential to the Safety Officer.
3. request an evaluation of any new operation or task if a MSD/RSI potential exists.
4. report any MSD/RSI complaint voiced by any employee even if the employee is not under his/her authority.
5. ensure that all employees receive the training required by this plan.

D. Each Employee shall :

1. report any symptoms of MSD/RSI at the onset of the injury and shall not wait until the MSD/RSI is disabling.
2. report any potential or actual activity that poses a possibility of producing MSD/RSI.
3. wear or use any personal protective equipment, tools, and other items required for the task assigned.
4. inform his/her supervisor if he/she needs any of the training required by the County.
5. visit the medical facility and professional medical personnel named by the County for all matters related to MSD/RSI or Workers' Compensation claims.
6. comply with all administrative controls that are enacted to reduce injuries.

There are three methods for controlling "Ergo stressors."

1. Engineering Controls
2. Work Practice Controls
3. Administrative Controls

Examples of these controls:

Engineering Controls

- a. Design or change the physical aspects of the workplace environment
 - Provide adjustable chairs and/or work tables.
 - Change the type of lighting
- b. Remove the hazard completely
 - Replace keystroke software with voice controlled software.
 - Contract with vendor to do word processing from dictation device.

Work Practice Controls

- a. Alter the manner in which the work is performed.
 - Train all employees in the ergonomics of equipment in use.
 - Provide the employees with ergonomically engineered tools
- b. Assign work team to study and recommend changes in the workplace.
 - Sequence of work tasks.
 - Research for approaches used by other units doing the same task

Administrative Controls

- a. Reduce the effects of the stressor
 - Develop written procedures for the reporting of injuries or potential hazards.
 - Develop policies to limit the exposure time to stressors.
- b. Establish realistic production goals
 - Reduce or eliminate overtime or extended work days.
 - Rotate job task assignments.
- c. Use pre-employment physical or job conditioning.
- d. Use pre and post work physical exercises
- e. Use software that reminds the employee to take a break after so much time on the computer or that suggests simple stress reducing exercises.